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(not for publication or broadcast)

Serving Seniors President/CEO Paul Downey to Chair California Commission on Aging

After being appointed to his second term as a commissioner, senior advocate and expert will put leadership skills to work to advise on policy affecting California seniors

SAN DIEGO – April 6, 2016 – Paul Downey, president and CEO of [Serving Seniors](#), has been unanimously elected by his peers to Chair the [California Commission on Aging \(CCoA\)](#) for a one-year term.

"Paul has had a great impact on local and national aging initiatives over his 20-year career," Assembly Speaker Emeritus Toni G. Atkins said. "His election as chair of the California Commission on Aging is a natural next step and I look forward to the gains that will be made possible for seniors due to his leadership."

In 2015, Downey was reappointed to the CCoA to serve as a commissioner for a second term by Atkins when she was Assembly Speaker. The CCoA is the principal advisory body to the Governor, State Legislature, as well as State, Federal and local agencies, on issues affecting older individuals in order to ensure a quality of life for older Californians so they may live with dignity in their chosen environment.

Under his leadership, Downey, the first chair from San Diego, will focus his efforts on improving senior nutrition and poverty. This includes working to increase the state match for funding the Older Americans Act senior nutrition programs and subsidies to build affordable housing for seniors. In addition, the CCoA will work on raising awareness on ageism and create a better understanding of older adults' needs and contributions to society.

Downey has skillfully led Serving Seniors, a non-profit dedicated to helping seniors in poverty live healthy and fulfilling lives, for more than 20 years. Downey also works with senior advocacy experts on a national level in his role as immediate past president of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP). NANASP supports the Older Americans Act, which has made it possible to provide a range of home and community-based services, such as home delivered meals, nutrition programs, in-home services, transportation, legal services, elder abuse prevention and caregivers support.

"I am pleased to be working with Paul in his new role as CCoA Chair. He brings a wealth of aging experience to the position. His work at the federal, state and local levels prove he is a successful advocate and outstanding leader," said Sandi Fitzpatrick, executive director of the CCoA. "Paul is consistently recognized for his visionary projects. He will elevate Commission meetings and activities with his passion for and commitment on behalf of older Californians."

On average, over 1,000 California Baby Boomers turn 65 years old every day. This unprecedented demographic shift requires strong leadership to enhance advocacy efforts through legislation and policy to effectively meet the needs of older adults. For more information on the CCoA, please visit <http://www.ccoa.ca.gov/>.

About Serving Seniors

[Serving Seniors](http://www.serving seniors.org) is a nonprofit agency dedicated to helping seniors in poverty live healthy and fulfilling lives. Founded more than 45 years ago, the organization meets its mission by offering a coordinated wellness model that addresses many senior issues under one roof. Through its collaborative partnerships, Serving Seniors is able to provide nutrition, wellness classes, mental health services, social services, advocacy, transitional housing for homeless seniors and permanent supportive housing. This safety net of services encourages seniors to live healthier lives by addressing successful aging. As a result, it keeps seniors out of emergency rooms, reduces hospital stays and delays and/or eliminates the need for long-term care. The agency has been skillfully led for more than 20 years by chief executive officer and president Paul Downey. Downey is the immediate past president of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP), and is the current chair and two-time appointed commissioner for the California Commission on Aging. Serving Seniors was a "Top Workplace of 2015" in the small company category by the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. For more information, please visit www.serving seniors.org, [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#), or call (619) 235-6572.

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